



NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

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Date: 10/5/2019

Person Contacted: Mr. Ryan White (Private Pilot, Witness)

NTSB Accident Number: ERA20FA002

Narrative:

Mr. Ryan White reported that he is a private pilot and was flying the second airplane on the cross-country flight with the accident airplane (N2FB). The following is a summary of a telephone conversation of what he reported:

On the morning of the accident, which was October 4, 2019, Mr. White, the airplane owner (Mr. Manzer), and the student pilot (Mr. Lewis), departed from Asheboro Airport (HBI) about 9:00AM EDT, in N2FB (accident airplane). Mr. White stated that he was seated in the right seat, the student pilot was seated in the left seat, and the airplane owner was seated in the back seat. Mr. White stated that he flew to the final destination of Knoxville Downtown Island Airport (DKX), Knoxville, Tennessee. During this cross-country flight they made several stops and arrived into DKX about 2:00 or 3:00PM local.

Mr. White reported that the purpose of the flight from HBI to DKX was for the N2FB airplane owner (Mr. Manzer) to purchase another airplane (Piper PA28-140, N5656W). Mr. Manzer completed the purchase to Mr. White's knowledge, and then Mr. White flew the newly purchased airplane back to HBI, from DKX.

Mr. White stated that he checked the fuel quantity in N2FB prior to the flight back to HBI; he observed the fuel filled to "the tabs" which he believed was about 37 gallons. He reported that the airplane was filled by a full service fixed-base operator, Metropolitan Knox. Mr. White believed that he departed DKX about 6:00PM local, about 30 minutes before the accident airplane departed, which Mr. White concluded that he believed the accident airplane departed about 6:30PM local.

Mr. White reported that he landed at HBI on runway 3. His handwritten notes from his flight were still available to him, and he reported that the AWOS reported the following at HBI; wind 080 at 5, visibility 10 miles, broken clouds at 7,500, temperature 29C, dewpoint 19C, and altimeter 30.05. He reported that it was a dark night.



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After his landing, Mr. White walked into the FBO and heard the accident airplane radio over the CTAF. He heard a pilot announce that they were going to land on runway 21 and were going to enter a left downwind. Mr. White walked outside to watch for the accident airplane. He observed the airplane fly directly over the airfield, from the west to the east, about 2,000 ft mean sea level. He watched the airplane continue eastbound, and then it turned left, and disappeared from his view due to large trees. He believed the time was about 8:30PM local time, on October 4, 2019.

Mr. White had flown the accident airplane in the recent past and reported additional details about the condition of the airplane. On Wednesday, October 2, 2019, Mr. White flew a night flight in the accident airplane from HBI to Siler City Municipal Airport (SCR) Siler City, North Carolina. During the taxi to depart SCR to return to HBI, the engine began to "backfire." Mr. White reported that he noticed this, and a mechanic radioed to him that something was wrong. Mr. White taxied back to the hangar. He reported that he believed the mechanics discovered that the left magneto was "fouled." He was not aware of the complete details of what repairs were made or authorized by the owner, as he departed back to HBI by car before the work was completed. He believed the maintenance shop was Cardinal Air at SCR.

He believed that the airplane owner flew the airplane back from SCR to HBI on Thursday, October 3, 2019. Mr. White reported that he personally had performed a run-up with the accident airplane on Thursday, the day before the accident, and he did not notice the same backfiring.

Mr. White also reported that the vacuum pump had failed on the accident airplane and had been failed for at least 2 weeks. He stated that the heading indicator and attitude indicator were not covered up and would "fade" or drift around during flight. He witnessed the instruments do this, on the flight from HBI to DKX the morning of the accident.

Mr. White reported that the accident pilot routinely used Foreflight on an iPad and had a portable GPS device on-board that he used to navigate.

Mr. White reported that it was his opinion that the student pilot was likely at the controls for the night accident flight. Mr. White stated that the airplane owner has told him in the past that he does not like to do night flying. Mr. White stated that he was not aware of a specific plan for the student pilot to fly, but that is his belief. Mr. White reported that he does not believe that airplane owner flies very often, or often at night.